Carbon Glow Refuse
AML Enhancement Project
Letcher County

Project Description

The proposed project (approximately 7.0 acres total) consists of removing an existing coal refuse pile within the Carbon Glow area of Letcher County for reprocessing. The project area is centrally located in the Blackey Quadrangle at 37° 9' 42.8" latitude and 82° 57' 8.4" longitude (see the attached map). The entire project work area has been previously disturbed by any or all of the following: coal mining operations, including mine drainage, timber operations, gas/oil well development, residential development, road construction, and/or high velocity water flows associated with heavy rain events and flooding. These disturbances consist of significant upheaval, mixing, and removal of earthen material from deep excavation, grading, sub-surface drilling, fill material placement, and erosion. There should be no undisturbed earthen material to a depth of several feet at the areas slated for significant project-related construction activities.

The proposed reclamation project area is located just upslope from Carbon Glow Road and Caudill Creek. The existing coal refuse pile is a potential fire hazard, an environmental threat, and a possible source of stream pollution in Caudill Creek. The coal refuse pile was created in the 1950s from underground workings within the Fire Clay Coal Seam by the Jeanne Francis Coal Company. There have been two previous AML projects associated with the refuse pile at the project site. The first was done to extinguish the refuse, which had been burning since the summer of 2012 (Carbon Glow Refuse Fire HP). The second was a small purchase project to address erosion and sediment problems associated with the site. The second project was completed in the spring of 2013.

This project will include excavating the existing coal refuse pile and processing the material at an off-site location. Cover material from the two borrow areas will then be used to reclaim the area. A domestic water supply at the northern end of cover material A will not be disturbed during the project.

Once removed, the coal refuse material will be trucked to an off-site processing plant. Two access roads will be used to reach the site. The existing upper access road will be used only for service access for light duty vehicles and workers to access the site. The lower access road will be used for transporting the estimated 130,000 cubic yards of raw refuse material away from the site.

The disturbed areas will be kept to a minimum with no unnecessary disturbances made. Within the proposed work area it will be necessary to create enough room to allow the transport trucks the ability to load and turn to exit the project area. The removal process will not begin until all necessary drainage features are in-place. This process will allow for complete removal of the refuse pile with minimal disturbance of the refuse pile outslope at any given time.

All refuse removal will be conducted between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, unless an emergency warrants the changing of the scheduled work hours. If emergency refuse removal is warranted, Division of Abandoned Mine Lands (DAML) personnel will be notified in advance of such removal. Emergency refuse removal will not occur until DAML gives prior approval unless the emergency constitutes a direct and imminent threat to public health and safety.

As refuse recovery operations are completed the area will be scarified, limed, topsoiled then seeded and mulched according to the revegetation plan. If the original topsoil located at the original groundline proves to not have been contaminated by the refuse material, alternate topsoil material will not be necessary. Upon completion of refuse recovery operations, all disturbed areas will be revegetated to prevent erosion and establish a suitable post reclamation land use, compatible with future anticipated uses by the surface owner. The areas to be revegetated may require lime application to neutralize any acidic or barren spots or to promote vegetative growth. Location and rates of lime application will be determined by DAML.

A temporary low water crossing is proposed to cross Caudill Creek. After completion of the project, the crossing will be removed and the stream banks will be returned to their original state. All necessary permits and/or variances will be procured prior to construction. Trees over 5" in diameter at breast height will require removal to re-establish the pre-existing access road; however, a qualified biologist has determined that none of these trees are suitable Indiana Bat habitat. No other trees over 5" in diameter at breast height are proposed to be removed. Construction disturbances will be kept to a minimum through the use of a stringently formulated sediment and erosion control program, consisting of hay-bale silt checks and silt fences maintained throughout the life of the project, prompt re-vegetation using agricultural limestone, fertilizer, seed, netting and mulch for the areas disturbed by the project.

This project will include pre- and/or post- project maintenance and repair of existing previously constructed public county roads utilized during the construction of this project, which are administered by the county or local road authority. This construction activity will be conducted under the authority and supervision of the local public road authority and will consist of standard road construction practices appropriate to mitigate impacts to the local community from potential degraded road conditions in order to maintain public traffic safety. Maintenance of the road shall include periodic inspection and cleaning of culverts and of ditches, if necessary. The surface of the access roads will be maintained by grading, filling and replacement surfacing materials. Sediment control from storm water runoff of road will be controlled by straw bales and silt fences, if necessary.